

BELMONT VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Staff Room, Main Library

Minutes, January 23, 2003

Members present: Jenny Fallon, Joe Greene, Matthew Hausmann, Tim Higgins, Bill Hofmann, Margaret O'Brien, Sarah Oaklander, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Barry Winston

Members absent: Martin Greco

Also Present: Dolores Keefe

7:07 p.m. Jennifer Page opened the meeting.

Minutes from January 9, 2003 were approved unanimously.

The meeting schedule through the summer was received, there appeared to be few conflicts after a cursory review by those present.

Chairman Jennifer Page distributed a copy of the latest draft of the Vision-21 recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Members took a few minutes to read the last draft of the Executive Summary. There was also a new section on "Why is it (Business) Important to Us? A discussion followed on the new text. All members agreed it was well done and clearly articulated the beliefs of the Committee. It was also agreed that this section should be submitted to the Citizen Herald as an "op-ed" piece.

Matthew Hausmann suggested that the Committee might want to expand upon the benefits of healthy businesses contributing taxes for municipal services, etc. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed to not get too detailed and leave the text as it is. The question of timing the op-ed piece should appear in the newspaper was discussed. Specifically, should it occur before the Board of Selectmen discusses the issue? It was agreed to put it in the paper simultaneously with the submittal of the final report to the Selectmen.

Discussion then turned to the order the different sections should appear in the document (there were nine pages of material). J. Page asked if all members supported each recommendation as proposed? There was full agreement. It was also agreed that there was no need to vote on the sections as all of the Committee members names are on the document.

Discussion then turned to the three quotes from the Vision Statement that are in the last section of the report. These pertained to the need for a strong business community. Should they be moved up into the cover letter to the Selectmen? It was agreed to leave them in place - as this will be the op-ed piece.

The disposition of data analysis that Margaret O'Brien put together was discussed. It is excellent material as it is really the basis for the report. It was agreed it should remain attached as an appendix.

The intent of J. Page is to have the work completed in preparation for the February 10th meeting of the Board of Selectmen. It was also agreed to try to provide copies of the final report to those who attended the forum and to the Chamber of Commerce.

The full liquor license issue was then reviewed. J. Fallon believed that the need or specific benefits of having such licenses should be detailed so it has a better chance of being approved by Town Meeting. BEDPG has a sub-group that will be looking into this issue further. It was agreed that the lack of a full liquor license is an impediment to a "first class" restaurant coming into Town. Discussion followed.

Paul Solomon asked about the status of the Public Information Group and the Newcomers Group now that the Economic Development issue has been completed. They are next and the Committee needs to begin work in these areas. Jennifer Page noted that she has volunteers and just needs to telephone them to initiate action by the Public Information Group. Jennifer Page likes the process employed in the Economic Development study and suggests the Committee use it and not be concerned about immediacy.

Paul Solomon explained the history of the implementation of the defined tasks the V-21 Committee was assigned to complete. He concluded by observing that the Public Information Group should be a simpler process and that those involved won't have to follow the same path as the Business and Economic Development initiative. But the group has not even been established - this needs to occur as soon as possible. The overall organization and goals of the various groups (V-21, BEDPG, Public Information Group, BOS) was discussed.

The importance of public participation in all of the efforts was reiterated and urged upon all future planning groups. All agreed strongly.

It was noted that Martin Greco and Margaret O'Brien had previously agreed to facilitate the Public Information Group.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Higgins,
Secretary Pro Tem